

## TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY WARFARE WILL BE HYBRID

BY

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# USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

## **TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY WARFARE WILL BE HYBRID**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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## TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY WARFARE WILL BE HYBRID

As often in the past, future conflicts will appear as hybrids comprising diverse, dynamic, and simultaneous combinations of organizations, technologies, and techniques that defy categorization.<sup>1</sup>

—Capstone Concept for Joint Operations  
Version 3, January 15, 2009

Hybrid warfare will be the dominant form of warfare in the twenty-first century due to the prevalence of hybrid threats that currently exist throughout the world. It is a combination of conventional and irregular warfighting capabilities; hybrid warfare is combination of capabilities that will give the implementer a decisive advantage over its adversary. As Carl Von Clausewitz predicted in his book *On War* over one hundred and seventy-eight years ago, “Wars in every period have independent forms and independent conditions, and, therefore, every period must have its independent theory of war.”<sup>2</sup> The Capstone Concept for Joint Operations predicts that future conflicts will be a combination of traditional and irregular warfare. Therefore, it can be argued hybrid warfare will be the dominant form of warfare in the twenty-first century with its own limiting conditions and its own peculiar preconceptions.

This strategy research project posits a plausible hybrid warfare scenario that the United States and its allies and partners may face in the future in order to illustrate why hybrid warfare is unique and distinctly different from regular and irregular warfare. It will also define hybrid threats as well as define hybrid warfare. Additionally, it will examine the emergence of hybrid warfare and provide historical examples of hybrid warfare. This strategy research project will also postulate on the reasons why hybrid warfare will be the dominant form of warfare that most sovereigns will apply in the twenty-first century, examine the National Military Strategy for defining hybrid warfare, and analyze Joint and

Service hybrid warfare doctrine. Finally, this paper will recommend changes in strategy, force structure, and doctrine to ensure the US military is prepared to counter this dangerous, growing threat for the next 25 years. It is critically important for the Department of Defense to determine the strategic implications of hybrid warfare on the National Military Strategy and the way that the United States military will fight hybrid warfare. The strategy research project will also make a case for why the Department of Defense must develop a comprehensive military strategy that will guide the services in their development of doctrine for conducting hybrid warfare.

#### Plausible Hybrid Warfare Scenario of the Future

The year is 2014 and Pakistan has become a failed state, which has a domino effect throughout the Middle East as well as globally. General Hamid Gul, former head of Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence, removes from power Pakistan's President Zardari, whom is viewed by most of the Middle East as a United States puppet, in a coup d'état. The 911 review website alludes that General Hamid Gul is still very influential in Pakistan today and that he supports Osama bin Laden's innocence.

The retired Pakistani general who is very close to the Taliban and Osama bin Laden contends the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington were the work of renegade U.S. Air Force elements working with the Israelis. He contends bin Laden had nothing to do with the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, saying instead that they were the work of the Mossad, the Israeli intelligence service -- a version of events that has been endorsed by Islamic fundamentalist clerics and is widely accepted by Muslims throughout the Arab world.<sup>3</sup>

Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence, which supported General Hamid Gul's coup d'état also, worked concurrently with the Middle Eastern Islamic community to conduct a simultaneous attack against the United States and its allies. The Inter-Service Intelligence coordinated with Al-Qaeda and Lashkar-e-Toiba to conduct synchronized

terrorist attacks against the United States and its allies in the Middle East and throughout Europe when Pakistan and the Taliban launch a conventional attack against the United States and its allies in Afghanistan. Concurrently, Al-Qaeda attempts to initiate two electro magnetic pulse bombs in New York and Washington, D.C.

Simultaneously, Iran conducts cyber network attacks against the United States in retaliation for the cyber attack that occurred on September 23, 2010 against its nuclear power plant. The cyber network attacks are targeted at the New York stock exchange and the Pentagon, which will have far-reaching effects on the global economy and the United States' ability to command and control as well as support its forces on the ground in Afghanistan. These attacks are a supporting effort for Pakistan's conventional operations against the United States and its allies as well as a supporting effort for the operations being conducted by Al-Qaeda and Lashkar-e-Toiba.

This fictional scenario is an example of how a coalition of state and non-state actors can conduct hybrid warfare against the United States and its allies. This scenario illustrates the blending of conventional and irregular methods of warfare in order to defeat the United States and its allies and to make the Americans leave the Middle East. Finally, this fictional scenario highlights the Obama administration's concerns that "identified Pakistan as a much more strategically troubling problem than Afghanistan, because the sanctuaries there for Al-Qaeda and other affiliate groups were more of a threat to the United States."<sup>4</sup>

### Hybrid Threats Defined

Hybrid threats need to be clearly defined before examining hybrid warfare. The enemies the United States faces today cannot engage the United States military on the conventional battlefield as a peer competitor. Therefore, they must adapt to attack in

other ways to level the playing field, thus the emergence of hybrid threats. Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Frank G. Hoffman, the principal architect of the hybrid theory of warfare, defines hybrid threats as, “Any adversary that simultaneously and adaptively employs a fused mix of conventional weapons, irregular tactics, terrorism and criminal behavior in the battle space to obtain their political objectives.”<sup>5</sup> The United States Joint Forces Command defines hybrid threat as,

Any adversary that simultaneously and adaptively employs a tailored mix of conventional, irregular, terrorism and criminal means or activities in the operational battlespace. Rather than a single entity, a hybrid threat or challenger may be comprised of a combination of state and non-state actors.<sup>6</sup>

It is noteworthy that the United States Army defines hybrid threats somewhat differently than Hoffman. The Army’s primary focus is on operations against hybrid threats while Hoffman’s is on warfare, which is fixated on the operational design of warfare vice tactical warfare. In accordance with change 1 to Field Manual 3-0,

*Operations:*

Hybrid threats are characterized by the combination of regular forces governed by international law, military tradition, and custom with irregular forces that are unregulated and as a result act with no restrictions on violence or targets for violence. This could include militias, terrorists, guerrillas, and criminals. Such forces combine their abilities to use and transition between regular and irregular tactics and weapons. These tactics and weapons enable hybrid threats to capitalize on perceived vulnerabilities making them particularly effective.<sup>7</sup>

Hybrid threats combine the attributes of regular and irregular forces, which means they can operate as a regular armed force of a nation-state one moment and can revert to terrorist, criminal, or guerrilla tactics when deemed appropriate. Notably, hybrid threats are an economy of force enemy with advanced weaponry and tactics who are not or at least think they are not obligated to adhere to the law of land warfare. The

United States military fought earlier versions of hybrid threats in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Taliban is a great example of a hybrid threat that is continuing to evolve and learn from hard-fought lessons on the battlefield in Afghanistan. Today the Taliban is fighting as a combined arms force while employing insurgency tactics throughout Afghanistan while employing terrorist-like tactics in Pakistan. A great example is provided by Lieutenant Colonel Eshan Mehmood Khan, Pakistan Army, who states, “[The] Taliban are waging a hybrid nature of war, which is neither wholly limited nor a total war, and thus an assortment of the two forms of Clausewitz’s War in Reality.”<sup>8</sup> He continues:

Taliban are waging a proper insurgency in Afghanistan wherein they have structured a classic counter-state all over the country. The case of Pakistan is different in a number of aspects.... Taliban Warfare wherein they have made choice for a pure terrorism based on clandestinity [*sic*] with the aim of coercing the Government and the Security Forces to desist from supporting the US and its allies.<sup>9</sup>

### Hybrid Warfare Defined

Hybrid warfare is different from any kind of warfare the United States and its allies have fought thus far. Michael Isherwood, a senior analyst in Northrop Grumman’s Analysis Center, where he provides in-depth analysis of military, political, and technological developments affecting national security, states:

Hybrid warfare is conceptually distinct in that it envisions low-tempo but nevertheless lethal action at different points along the spectrum of conflict at the same time. The American military experience in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq led the Joint Staff to reformulate its phases of war. Commanders now plan for operations from Phase Zero shaping through dominant operations and into stability and reconstruction.... However, the additional phases still pictured a sequential set of operations progressing from shaping and deterring to seizing the initiative, major combat, and stability. Hybrid warfare is different in that it allows for an adversary to

engage at multiple phases at the same time and puts a different set of demands on military forces.<sup>10</sup>

As the strategic leader of the Department of Defense, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates instinctively knew the United States was fighting a different war in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Gates is cited as stating that, “The categories of warfare are blurring and no longer fit into neat, tidy boxes. One can expect to see more tools and tactics of destruction – from the sophisticated to the simple – being employed simultaneously in hybrid and more complex forms of warfare.”<sup>11</sup> Those wars were not solely traditional (conventional), nor were they solely irregular; they were a combination of both traditional and irregular methods of warfare. Although he fully supported the development of a counter insurgency strategy, he intuitively knew that a counter insurgency strategy would be insufficient to defeat the adaptive enemy the United States and its allies faces in Iraq and Afghanistan. In September 2008, Secretary Gates directed the Department of Defense to develop a strategy that stressed balance, which emphasized that the Department should be well versed in dealing with irregular and traditional threats to include hybrid threats. One could argue that Secretary Gates has tasked the Department of Defense to develop the capability to be more adaptable and flexible in order to conduct full spectrum operations against irregular, traditional, and hybrid threats. The *Joint Operating Environment* reflects Secretary Gates’ thoughts:

In hybrid warfare, the adversary most likely presents unique combinational threats specifically designed to target United States vulnerabilities. Instead of separate challengers with fundamentally different approaches (conventional, irregular, or terrorist), we can expect to face competitors who will employ all forms of war, including criminal behavior, perhaps simultaneously.<sup>12</sup>

Secretary Gates primarily directed this because of projected fiscal constraints that would occur in an environment of greater uncertainty and fewer resources.

## Hybrid Warfare Contrasted Against New Forms of Warfare

In order to view hybrid warfare as a valid new form of warfare, it must be compared and contrasted to the new forms or new terms of warfare that have emerged in recent years, namely Fourth Generation warfare and compound wars.

Hybrid warfare is distinctly different from Fourth Generation warfare. As developed by Lieutenant Colonel William Lind in 1989, Fourth Generation warfare consists of three primary concepts: (1) The state loses its monopoly on war; (2) Fourth Generation warfare is marked by a return to a world of cultures, not merely states, in conflict; (3) At its core lies a universal crisis of legitimacy of the state, and that crisis means many countries will evolve Fourth Generation warfare on their soil.<sup>13</sup> Lind's concept blurs the lines between war and politics and is more an evolution of warfare vice a new form of warfare with a strong emphasis on politics. General (Retired) James N. Mattis stated it best in regards to Fourth Generation warfare:

Ultimately, a real understanding of history means that we face NOTHING new under the sun. For all the '4<sup>th</sup> Generation of War' intellectuals running around today saying that the nature of war has fundamentally changed, the tactics are wholly new, etc., I must respectfully say... 'Not really' ....<sup>14</sup>

However, it must be noted that Lind stated, "All over the world, state militaries find themselves fighting non-state opponents such as Al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, and the FARC. Almost everywhere, the state is losing."<sup>15</sup> The Second Lebanon War between the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) and Hezbollah is a great example of hybrid warfare. In 2006, Hezbollah, operating in Lebanon, was simultaneously a state-sponsored terrorist group, a political movement, a humanitarian organization, and a conventional military force. Hezbollah employed new technologies as force multipliers, including strategic rocket assaults, unmanned aerial vehicles, night-vision technology,

Improvised Explosive Device (IEDs), and the latest antitank guided missiles. To combat Hezbollah, the IDF was forced into a type of hybrid warfare – warfare that goes beyond conflict between states and armed groups and includes multiple forms of combat simultaneously, including conventional maneuver warfare, irregular tactics, information warfare, terrorist acts, and criminal disorder.<sup>16</sup>

Compound warfare differs from hybrid warfare in that an irregular force is used in concert with a regular force, however, not in the same battlespace. The irregular forces are used as an economy of force, to attrit the opposing force and to support a strategy of exhaustion. As Thomas M. Huber, author of *Compound Warfare: That Fatal Knot*, states:

Compound warfare is the simultaneous use of a regular or main force and an irregular or guerrilla force against an enemy. In other words, the Compound Warfare operator increases his military leverage by applying both conventional and unconventional force at the same time. Compound warfare most often occurs when all or part of a minor power's territory is occupied by an intervening major power.<sup>17</sup>

Two great illustrations of compound wars are the American Revolution and the American Civil War, in which irregular forces lacked the conventional capabilities, operated in different battlespaces, and were used as an economy of force to attrit the opposing force.

Noteworthy is that in compound warfare, traditional and irregular forces usually operate in different theaters and never fuse nor combine in battle and lack the synergy of a hybrid threat. As Hoffman argues, “Hybrid threats, on the other hand, appear to have a greater degree of operational and tactical coordination or fusion.”<sup>18</sup> Hybrid warfare has both traditional and irregular forces in the same battlespace working under



a unity of command in order to achieve a unity of effort to accomplish a political objective. This is significantly different from compound warfare.

### Emergence of Hybrid Warfare

As Hoffman and Mattis stated in their paper,

Hybrid wars are not new, but they are different. In this kind of warfare, forces become blurred into the same force or are applied in the same battlespace. The combination of irregular and conventional force capabilities, either operationally or tactically integrated, is quite challenging, but historically it is not necessarily a unique phenomenon.<sup>19</sup>

It could be argued this form of warfare has surfaced as a serious intellectual topic only in recent years and that it was primarily caused by the wars being fought in Iraq and Afghanistan, where there was a blending of traditional and irregular tactics, techniques, and procedures. This has caused historians to review our historical wars to determine if the sovereign states, specifically the United States, fought hybrid wars in the past.

One could argue the United States has conducted hybrid warfare numerous times throughout its history. The United States has effectively employed traditional and irregular forces in the same battlespace in order to achieve objectives. It is true that Special Operations Forces working through, by and with indigenous forces conducting guerrilla warfare (irregular) are normally supporting efforts to General Purpose Forces (traditional) operations, however, not always in the same battlespace. For example, Special Operations Forces normally conducted operations in a separate area from traditional forces in a Special Operations Area or Joint Special Operations Area. Both in Iraq and Afghanistan, Special Operations Forces and General Purpose Forces are operating in the same battlespace. One could argue that role has been reversed in

some operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan, in which the General Purpose Forces were a supporting effort to Special Operations Forces operations.

The Second Lebanon War is often used as a hybrid warfare case study. Hezbollah, a terrorist organization, demonstrated state-like military capabilities that included thousands of short and intermediate range rockets and missiles. This case illustrated how a non-state actor could engage and embarrass a state by using a mixture of guerrilla tactics with conventional weapons to attack enemy weaknesses. Dr. Stephen Biddle of the Council on Foreign Relations and Mr. Jeffrey Friedman, Harvard Kennedy School of Government, noted in their monograph, which examined Hezbollah's conduct of the 2006 campaign:

Lebanon in 2006 shows us a concrete example of a non-state actor whose military behavior was far from the classical guerrilla model seen in today's Iraq and Afghanistan.... And Hez-bollah in 2006 is unlikely to be the last of these... there is reason to believe that similar experience has been observed in recent decades in conflicts such as Chechnya, Slovenia, Bosnia, Croatia, Rwanda, and in actions such as Bai Beche or the Shah-i-Kot valley in Afghanistan in 2001-02.<sup>20</sup>

The acknowledgement of hybrid threats and hybrid warfare as future threats is not a United States-only frame of thought. Australian theorist Dr. Michael Evans wrote, "those concerned with preparing for armed conflict in the early twenty-first century must expect to confront a range of old, new, and hybrid forms of armed conflict." He continues, "The merging of modes of armed conflict suggests an era of warfare quite different from that of the recent past."<sup>21</sup>

#### Department of Defense Resistance

The Department of Defense has been slow to fully embrace hybrid warfare, although it has accepted hybrid threats more readily. It can be argued the Department is divided into three distinct schools of thought on warfare. The counterinsurgency school

of thought is primarily led by General David Petraeus, who is the father of the US Army's counterinsurgency doctrine and is currently serving as the commander of the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and U.S. Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A). This school of thought is pushing for ground forces to be trained in irregular warfare. The second school of thought is traditional, which focuses on fighting high intensity conflicts that are state versus state, conventional force against conventional force. The traditional school of thought is against reorienting forces away from their traditional missions. The third school of thought is the utility infielders.<sup>22</sup> This school argues that we require a force capable of conducting high intensity conflict operations as well as conducting counterinsurgency. The third school of thought influenced the United States Army to adopt the new term "full spectrum operations," under which the Army will operate in order to defeat traditional, irregular, and hybrid threats. One can argue that these three schools of thought will not adequately address the future hybrid threats and that they will not be properly prepared to conduct hybrid warfare. It could also be argued that if the Department of Defense does not take a balanced approach in seeing the future threat and preparing the force, then it could be setting itself up for failure by focusing on the irregular threat (current threat) or focusing on the future threat (high intensity conflict) in lieu of focusing on the hybrid threats that exist today and those hybrid threats of the future.

In September 2010, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) submitted to Congress an official report, based on the testimony of senior military officials. Congress tasked the GAO to examine: "(1) whether Department of Defense has defined hybrid warfare and how hybrid warfare differs from other types of warfare and (2) the extent to

which Department of Defense is considering the implications of hybrid warfare in its overarching strategic planning documents.”<sup>23</sup> Numerous senior officials testified, “current and future adversaries are likely to use ‘hybrid warfare’ tactics, a blending of conventional and irregular approaches across the full spectrum of conflict.”<sup>24</sup> Further, “Department of Defense has not officially defined hybrid warfare at this time and has no plans to do so because Department of Defense does not consider it a new form of warfare.”<sup>25</sup> The Government Accountability Office implied there existed discrepancies between the services on defining hybrid warfare. The United States Special Operations Command was the only entity noted that does not use the term hybrid warfare, “stating that current doctrine on traditional and irregular warfare is sufficient to describe the current and future operational environment.”<sup>26</sup> It should also be noted the services view current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan differently. Some view Afghanistan as irregular, while some others view it as a hybrid, whereas some view Iraq as traditional with a mix of irregular.

The GAO also examined current Department of Defense documents to determine if hybrid warfare was incorporated into strategic planning documents. It examined the 2008 National Defense Strategy, the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Report, the 2010 Joint Operating Environment, and the 2009 Capstone Concept for Joint Operations. The GAO noted that the hybrid and hybrid-related concepts appear in the Department of Defense overarching strategic planning document, 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review; however, hybrid warfare has not been incorporated into Department of Defense doctrine.<sup>27</sup> One could argue that the United States Army may have missed an opportunity with its revision of the Field Manual 3-0 update. It addresses hybrid threats

versus hybrid warfare and stated that the U.S. Army would conduct full spectrum operations to counter hybrid threats. The U.S. Marine Corps is in line with the United States Army in viewing hybrid as threats versus hybrid as warfare. This thought process is in line with the U.S. Special Operations Command that hybrid warfare is not a new form of warfare.

### Arguments for Hybrid Warfare

Most senior military officers as well as many military scholars see the future with multi-modal wars with a blurring of lines between traditional and irregular warfare. As per the GAO report, senior military officials as well as academia use the term hybrid warfare to describe the type of warfare that the United States and its allies will encounter in future conflicts. The *Joint Operating Environment* states that:

Ongoing operations and potential future conflicts are likely to be increasingly multidimensional, as a greater number of state and non-state actors employ a range and mix of military and non-military instruments in order to achieve their objective. The continued dominance of America's armed forces in large-scale force-on-force warfare provides powerful incentives for adversaries to employ methods designed to offset our strengths. From non-state actors using highly advanced military technology and sophisticated information operations, to states employing unconventional technologies, to the improvised explosive devices that pose grave threats to our troops, smart adversaries will tailor their strategies and employ their capabilities in sophisticated ways.<sup>28</sup>

In accordance with the GAO report, it was noted that some senior military officials used the term hybrid warfare and most stated that it was not a new form of warfare; however, hybrid warfare would encompass all forms of warfare across the full spectrum of conflict.<sup>29</sup> The senior strategic leader for the Department of Defense, Secretary Gates, stated:

So the notion that we are not taking seriously the range of potential future conflicts, I think, frankly is just a misunderstanding of what we're trying to do. It derives from my view that the old way, of looking at irregular warfare

as being one kind of conflict and conventional warfare as a discreet kind of warfare, is an outdated concept. And my belief, that conflict in the future will slide up and down a scale, both in scope or scale and in lethality. And we have to procure the kinds of things that give us -- the kinds of equipment and weapons that give us the maximum flexibility, across the widest range of that spectrum of conflict.<sup>30</sup>

One could argue that hybrid warfare emerged because of the United States' dominance in traditional warfare with a superior technological advantage in sensors, shooters, and battle command. The enemy is not stupid and gets a vote on how it will fight against the United States and its allies. It could be argued that hybrid warfare is a "poor-man's" war; however, the prudent way to view hybrid warfare is that it is the "smart-man's" war for engaging a superior capable force. The enemy knows it cannot win against the United States on the traditional battlefield. However, it should be noted this has not stopped state and non-state actors from engaging the United States in armed conflict. David Sadowski and Jeff Becker provide sage reasoning why hybrid warfare is the smart man's way of conducting war, with threats evolving by incorporating new ideas and capabilities to achieve their goals:

In spite of the relative success of the American style of warfare over the past three decades, an array of actors around the world continue to develop their own set of political and strategic goals and design military forces to pursue those goals.<sup>31</sup>

Hybrid warfare is not a replacement for traditional conflicts such as small-scale contingencies and limited or total war. Hybrid warfare will move throughout the full spectrum of conflict dependent upon the scale of the war and mission creep. The full spectrum of conflict consists of three environments: peacetime competition, conflict, and war, where the United States can find itself in peacetime competition with one nation and at war with another nation, while in conflict with still another nation – all at the same time. The enemies we face today as in the future will combine tactics, techniques, and

procedures of both regular and irregular warfare to level the battlefield with the United States and its allies. A great example of an existing hybrid threat is North Korea – which combines traditional and irregular forces in the same battlespace to achieve a unity of effort and unity of command for achieving its political objectives. North Korea has:

Developed hybrid capabilities in its Special Operations Forces. Numbering more than 60,000 troops, the North Korean Special Operations Forces would, in time of war, swiftly move to infiltrate South Korea by air, land, and maritime routes to attack military, political, and civilian targets. They would do this to both disrupt military operations and reduce the population's confidence in the government. This latter focus mirrors the objective associated with irregular warfare.... Prime example, If the US were ever to go to war with North Korea, the American response would be led by its conventional military forces.... When the nature of the conflict involves more counterinsurgency, counterterrorist, or stability operations missions and there are non-state actors present in the battlespace, the US would have to develop a tailored hybrid campaign in response.<sup>32</sup>

Another example is Iran, which is also developing a similar hybrid capability. It is also important to note that states and non-state actors are also developing the capability to conduct cyber warfare and cyber attacks to disrupt command and control, financial targets, and the communications infrastructure. Isherwood posits,

Experience has suggested that a predominantly conventional United States military campaign will be insufficient in the hybrid contest due to the predominant presence of non-state belligerents and the contest's focus on influencing the population and the legitimacy of the government.<sup>33</sup>

### Counter Arguments against Hybrid Warfare

Dr. Russell W. Glenn argues that hybrid warfare, conflict, war, or threat does not merit its newfound notoriety in light of both the Second Lebanon War and broader analysis.<sup>34</sup> He questions if it makes sense adding another concept to defense thinking...if it is value-added. He argues that the impetus for the Israeli Defense Force's poor performance during the Second Lebanon War was due to an intellectual virus that clouded rather than clarified the guidance issued to the IDF.<sup>35</sup> He further states that the

United States is also vulnerable to adverse influences. Dr. Glenn makes a compelling argument that he uses to justify that the hybrid warfare theory is nothing more than irregular warfare once examined. He cites the official joint doctrine definition of irregular warfare:

A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). Irregular warfare favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capacities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will.<sup>36</sup>

Honorable Robert Wilke argues, "Hybrid war seems to be a modern variation of what has been called compound warfare, which begins with a regular force augmenting its operations with irregular capabilities."<sup>37</sup>

### Refutation

The United States faces adaptive enemies who know they cannot defeat the United States military as a peer competitor on the traditional battlefield. Those enemies will combine their regular and irregular warfighting capabilities to attack from multiple fronts – terror, cyber, information, psychological, conventional, unconventional, as well as criminal. Our enemies are learning lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan and developing new strategies to defeat the United States military. As Colonel (Retired) Robert Killebrew argues,

Irregular warfare is not easily deterred. So while the U.S. must maintain high-end forces to deter infrequent high-intensity war (and to win, if deterrence fails), members of its armed forces are far more likely to be employed in low-end skirmishes and counterinsurgencies as the 21st century advances. In a strategic sense, supporting friends and allies in struggling and threatened new states against insurgency is a sort of global defensive posture as intelligence agencies, police and security forces go after insurgent leaderships.<sup>38</sup>



The Secretary of Defense and the Department of Defense recently accepted the hybrid warfare term, which is critically important because it forces changes to grand strategy, force structure, doctrine, and resource allocation. The United States Army added language in its recent change 1 to Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, to address hybrid threats, which is a very important step because it forces changes in doctrine as well as tactics, techniques, and procedures for its forces. This recognition will also affect how the United States Army as well as the other services organizes, trains, and equips its forces to fight hybrid threats and execute full spectrum operations in the near future. Additionally, formal recognition of the hybrid warfare construct will assist strategic leaders in developing grand strategy and policy and determine resource investment priorities within a fiscally constrained budget. Army Chief of Staff General George W. Casey Jr. stated it best regarding threats that the United States and its allies will face in the future:

Diverse actors, especially non-state actors, frequently operating covertly or as proxies for states, not bound by internationally recognized norms of behavior and resistant to traditional means of deterrence, will be difficult to discern and will shift their alliances and approaches over time to avoid our strengths. Hybrid threats—diverse, dynamic combinations of conventional, irregular, terrorist and criminal capabilities—will make pursuit of singular approaches difficult, necessitating innovative, hybrid solutions involving new combinations of all elements of national power.<sup>39</sup>

### Recommendations

The Department of Defense must holistically adopt the term hybrid warfare so the United States will develop grand strategy that properly addresses hybrid threats. Currently, the United States Army and the United States Marine Corps have modified their doctrine to address hybrid threats and not hybrid warfare. Full spectrum operations will not properly address the requirement to fight hybrid warfare. Hybrid warfare is not a

new form of warfare; however, it takes an adaptive mindset and flexible organization to fit hybrid threats. There is a danger that if the Department of Defense does not acknowledge hybrid warfare then the United States will be ill prepared to counter an enemy that fully employs hybrid warfare against the United States. The Department of Defense must also define what hybrid warfare is and what it is not. This will greatly assist the services in developing doctrine to fight hybrid wars.

The Department of Defense should conduct a bottom-to-top and top-to-bottom review of its force structure. This review is necessary to determine if the current force structure is sufficient to counter hybrid threats and to win a hybrid war. As the Department of Defense faces fiscal constraints in the upcoming years, it is prudent that it takes the necessary steps to ensure it is prepared for the future. Joint is the way the Department of Defense has fought wars and will continue to fight wars. The Department of Defense must improve the Joint education process in getting military personnel to Joint schools and assignments earlier. Multinational operations are the wave of the future; therefore, it is necessary to bolster military-to-military engagements in order to foster relations with our allies and partner nations so that we will not have to do it on the battlefield.

Leaders, battle staffs, and military forces must increase their capacity and capability in executing full spectrum operations in a fluid environment. The United States military is well-versed in executing counterinsurgency operations at the detriment of being able to execute high intensity operations. It can be argued the United States military has lost its capability to execute high intensity operations due to current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Department of Defense must reinvigorate the

national training centers that will train leaders, battle staffs, and military forces to execute full spectrum operations against hybrid threats and hybrid wars.

Lastly, the Department of Defense should increase the size of the Special Operations Forces and transition the General Purpose Forces to Multi-Purpose Forces. Special Operations Forces should be increased because of their military-to-military engagements with foreign militaries in order to build their capacity and capability to conduct the full spectrum of Special Operations in support of their countries. The General Purpose Forces should undergo a transition to make them Multi-Purpose Forces capable of conducting seamless conventional and irregular operations. This proposal is not to make General Purpose Forces Special Operations Forces. This proposal is made in light of the need for the United States military to conduct full spectrum operations; therefore, it is prudent for its General Purpose Forces to be capable of conducting the full spectrum of operations effortlessly in the three block wars that we are fighting today and in future wars. Otherwise, the risk is that the U.S. military will not have forces that are agile, adaptable, and flexible to conduct full spectrum operations against hybrid threats.

### Conclusion

The United States is not fighting conventional wars in Iraq and Afghanistan today; it is fighting hybrid wars in both countries. It can be argued the war in Iraq is more conventional with flavors of irregular tactics and Afghanistan is irregular with flavors of regular tactics, which makes both of those wars hybrids. The distinction is that hybrid wars are not fought on the conventional battlefield with force-on-force engagements but on an asymmetrical battlefield using a combination of regular and irregular tactics against a conventional force. The enemy in both Iraq and Afghanistan is conducting

engagements with the United States military and its allies within the indigenous population centers, which restricts the United States military's and its allies' ability to engage the enemy. This aspect of the hybrid war is information warfare combined with irregular warfare to achieve strategic impacts. When a civilian casualty occurs it adversely affects the indigenous popular support to the legitimate government, the United States and its allies as well as international support for the wars through the mainstream media, the "CNN effect."

Hybrid warfare has been successfully executed on the battlefield since the Second Lebanon War in 2006. Hybrid warfare is an economy of force war, in which an inferior force using an indirect approach can engage a superior force and cause their termination of hostilities before achieving their political objectives. States and non-state actors have learned important lessons from the Second Lebanon War to wars that are currently being fought today -- if you are fighting a superior force, you can level the battlefield by employing regular and irregular warfighting capabilities along with the other elements of national power to achieve strategic impacts to erode the enemy's national interests and will.

The future will continue to challenge our armed forces and our Nation as the persistent conflict continues against violent extremism. The enemy is continuing to learn and grow and will use hybrid warfare to even the playing field with the United States and its allies. Hybrid warfare is the new game in town and the United States must master it before our enemies do.

## Endnotes

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